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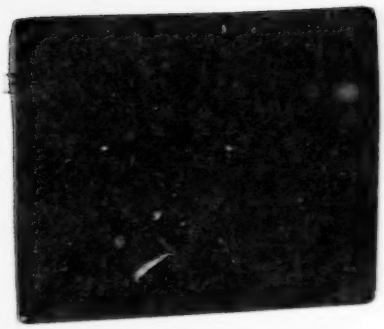

INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE
FOR THE ELABORATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL
CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN
THOSE COUNTRIES EXPERIENCING SERIOUS
DROUGHT AND/OR DESERTIFICATION,
PARTICULARLY IN AFRICA
Tenth session
New York, 6-17 January 1997
Agenda item 3

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN THOSE COUNTRIES EXPERIENCING DROUGHT AND/OR DESERTIFICATION, PARTICULARLY IN AFRICA

REGIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISM FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Terms of reference

REAFFIRMING that the region of Latin America and Caribbean is severely affected by drought and desertification,

CONSIDERING that the Governments of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean assign a major role to efforts to combat desertification through the promotion of programmes and their integration in national development plans while promoting social participation at all levels,

CONSIDERING that article 7 of the Regional Implementation Annex for Latin America and the Caribbean calls for the establishment of a mechanism for coordinating the national focal points,

CONSIDERING that at the Second Regional Latin American and Caribbean Conference on the Convention to Combat Desertification, held in Mexico City in June 1996, the experts designated by participating Governments recommended that the Interim Secretariat of the Convention should be invited to prepare a proposal on the terms of reference and practical arrangements for the operation of such a regional coordination mechanism,

The Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean Parties to this Convention agree to establish a regional coordination mechanism, which shall have the following terms of reference:

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PURPOSES AND ACTIVITIES

The principal purpose of the regional coordination mechanism shall be to develop joint initiatives to be undertaken by the countries of the region for the implementation of the Convention aimed at combating desertification and/or mitigating the effects of drought through the following activities:

(a) Exchanges of information and experiences;

(b) Coordination of subregional and regional activities;

(c) Promotion of technical, scientific, technological and financial cooperation; and

(d) Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of action programmes.

In particular, the regional coordination mechanism shall cooperation with the Governments of the countries parties in the region in formulating a Regional Action Programme to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought consistent with the principal purpose of the mechanism and containing guidelines for the development and implementation of the following activities:

1. Identification of priority actions and areas of cooperation permitting an effective implementation of strategies to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought at the subregional and regional levels;

2. Identification, on the basis of an analysis of specific national conditions obtaining in individual countries with respect to the legal, institutional and public policy frameworks, of the legal, administrative, economic and educational instruments necessary to ensure appropriate inclusion at the national level of activities and commitments stemming from the implementation of the Convention;

3. The technical cooperation necessary for the formulation, implementation, evaluation, monitoring and review of local, national and subregional action programmes, including, inter alia, actions to establish information and information systems relevant to efforts to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought, and networks linking such systems, guaranteeing smooth communication between the various organizations concerned;

4. The definition and adoption of indicators and procedures for elaborating and updating diagnostic studies, and for the systematic monitoring of processes associated with the phenomena of desertification and drought in the region and the elaboration, updating an analysis of such processes;

5. Support for programmes and projects of scientific and technological research with academic institutions, the private sector and other governmental and non-governmental organizations dealing with the problem;

6. Formulation and development and/or strengthening of the institutional capacity of the countries of the region, and, in particular, of training, education and citizen awareness programmes concerning efforts to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought;

7. Design and application of mechanisms for strengthening the participation of the inhabitants of affected areas, in particular, women, indigenous people and youth, in planning, implementing and monitoring the action programmes;

8. Design and application of national and local financing mechanisms and activation of existing bilateral and multilateral financing channels with a view to mobilizing additional resources to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought in the region;

9. Coordination of activities with the focal points designated by the Governments of the region, with the agencies and programmes of the United Nations system, with multilateral and bilateral cooperation agencies and with other intergovernmental agencies and non-governmental organizations that promote and support the implementation of the Convention and the Regional Implementation Annex for Latin America and the Caribbean;

10. Coordination of activities with the secretariats of other relevant international organs and conventions and conclusion of institutional cooperation agreements;

11. Holding of coordination meetings among the countries of the region for the purpose of evaluating and following up the action programmes at the national, subregional and regional levels; and

12. Evaluation of the implementation of the Convention both in terms of execution of the activities provided for in the Convention itself, the Regional Implementation Annex and the Regional Action Programme, and in terms of the evolution of the phenomena of desertification and drought insofar as it may be attributed to the actions taken.

OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE

The central component of the Regional Coordination Mechanism shall consist of a Regional Coordination Unit of the Permanent Secretariat of the Convention, comprising the focal points designated by the States Parties in the region and acting under the guidance of a Steering Committee which shall meet at least once a year.

The Unit shall be located in the premises of the Regional Office of the United Nations Environment Programme (hereinafter referred to as UNEP) in Mexico City, and the Programme shall make available to the Regional Coordination Unit the physical space and administrative facilities required in order for it to operate satisfactorily.

Without prejudice to the institutional and administrative support of UNEP, inputs in human resources and in kind and/or financial support shall be sought from other organizations involved in combating desertification that are participating in the implementation of the Regional Action Programme.

An official of the Permanent Secretariat of the Convention shall serve as Regional Coordinator.

The Unit shall promote the establishment of an Advisory Committee made up of representatives of international and regional organizations carrying out important activities in relation to combating desertification and mitigating drought in the region. A representative of the regional chapter of the network of non-governmental organizations involved in combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought shall also participate in the Advisory Committee.

The Unit shall be responsible for preparing annual technical reports on its activities and in particular on the implementation of the Regional Action Programme, including the expected and actual results, and these reports shall be submitted for consideration by the Steering Committee and the Conference of Parties to the Convention.

The Steering Committee composed of the focal points designated by the Governments in the region shall evaluate periodically (at least once a year), through annual meetings to be held jointly with other meetings relevant to the subject, the management of the Regional Unit.

The Unit may conclude institutional agreements with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations for the purpose of promoting cooperation in specific activities within the framework of the Regional Action Programme at the national, subregional and regional levels.

Provision shall be made at the national level for an inter-agency liaison mechanism coordinated by the national offices of the United Nations Development Programme and representing the Regional Coordination Unit, for the purpose of extending direct or local support to the national focal points as required.

FINANCING

The installation and operating costs of the Coordination Unit shall be borne by the administrative budget of the Convention, which shall include contributions from UNEP, the Government of Mexico and other participating Governments and organizations.

In addition, the Unit shall conclude institutional agreements for the purpose of mobilizing additional funding so as to permit the results of its operations to be optimized.

The Unit shall draw up annual financial reports and shall keep the Governments in the region, the Secretariat of the Convention, the Steering Committee, the Advisory Committee, donor countries and other participating organizations informed of its activities.